

IN THE CLAIMS:

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1. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for baking a substrate comprising:  
a hot plate having respective first and second surfaces;  
a first recess disposed in the first surface of the hot plate;  
the first recess defined in part by at least one wall and a bottom;  
the first recess having a generally uniform depth defined by the distance between the bottom of the first recess and the first surface of the hot plate; **and**  
the first recess sized such that at least a portion of an outer edge of the substrate contacts at least a portion of the first surface of the hot plate when the substrate is disposed over the first recess; **and**  
**a recess disposed proximate a center region of the bottom of the first recess.**

2. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising the first recess sized such that approximately one tenth of an inch of the outer edge of the substrate contacts the first surface of the hot plate when the substrate is positioned to cover the first recess.

3. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising the first recess having a depth between approximately six thousandths of an inch (0.006") to eight thousandths of an inch (0.008").

4. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising the first recess defined by four walls having approximately equal lengths.

5. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising:  
a second recess disposed in the second surface of the plate; and  
the second recess defined by at least one wall and having an approximately uniform depth.

6. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising the plate made from silicon carbide (SiC).

7. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising:  
at least one robot access cutout disposed on a first edge of the plate; and  
at least two robot access cutouts disposed on a second edge of the plate opposite the first edge.

8. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising a heat source operably coupled to the second surface of the plate.

A 9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising:  
~~a recess disposed proximate a center region of the bottom of the first recess; and~~  
the recess disposed within the first recess sized such that an approximately uniform temperature is achieved at a first surface of the substrate disposed over the first recess.

10. (Original) A system for baking a substrate comprising:  
a hot plate having respective first and second surfaces;  
a first recess having an approximately uniform depth defined by a bottom and at least one wall disposed in the first surface of the hot plate;  
a second recess having an approximately uniform depth defined by a bottom and at least one wall disposed in the second surface of the hot plate;  
a heating source operably coupled to the second recess;  
the hot plate operable to maintain the substrate proximate the first surface such that the first recess is covered and a portion of a first surface of the substrate is in contact with the first surface of the hot plate proximate the wall defining the first recess; and  
the hot plate further operable to establish an approximately uniform temperature in the substrate during baking.

11. (Original) The system of Claim 10 further comprising a robot mechanism operable to position the substrate on the hot plate.

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12. (Original) The system of Claim 10 further comprising:

a recess disposed in the bottom of the first recess; and

the recess sized to achieve an approximately uniform temperature in the substrate during baking.